THE UNIVERSITY AND THE NATION[1]

I HAVE chosen as the subject of my address "The University and the Nation" because the Nation at this time is face to face with a crisis in its history of supreme importance, not only to itself as affecting its whole future national life, but in its relation to the politics of the world, to the great cause of human civilization, of international comity, and of the right of the individual to live in peace and in the reasonable pursuit of happiness.

And I have brought the University into intimate connection with the Nation because of the supreme part that it must play in the national consciousness, and in pointing out by its attitude toward the things of life, through the whole wide range of human intelligence, the true direction of safety and of progress. This is a time beyond almost any other in the history of the Nation when there is an immediate need, that cannot be too greatly accentuated, of taking a careful and conscientious inventory of what we have and in what we are found wanting. Our national pace has been so swift that it is high time that we should stop and take breath for the longer running that in God's good grace is before us in our national life; and the University, so far as it shall have it in its power, should be that force to set it on its certain way toward the goal of successful achievement.

I think of the University, then, in saying this, as a live and progressive force, and not as passive or inactive as it has sometimes seemed to be; and I have thought of it as not

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belonging, in word or in deed, to a narrow or chosen teaching.

The true University, the University of the present, is already a pregnant force in the life of the community, of which, as scarcely before in its history, it is not only a part, but a participant. If there ever was a time—and there doubtless was—when the University seemed to the world without its gates to stand consciously apart upon a height of its own self-righteousness, that day has long since disappeared, and there is no valley so deep of human occupation and of human interest that does not find in it, too, the University in its manifold activities working side by side with other laborers in solving, at least in its endeavors, the complex problems of living. But in the crisis that confronts us not only as a Nation for ourselves, but as an inseparable part, for all times hereafter, of the interdependent nations of the earth, it must be even more determinate as a teacher and more dominant as a leader than it has ever been before in the whole of its history.

The conscious aim of every American University at the present time, wherever it may be, of yours and of mine, and whether it be supported by public taxation or by private endowment, is service. And by "service" I mean public service in its widest and most comprehensive sense: not merely in the generous proffer for the active and ready use of the municipality, the State, and the Nation of the teaching and research equipment of the University in materials and men; and not only in the sending out into the community competent engineers to build the country's railways and bridges, architects to design its public buildings, lawyers and judges to serve its courts of law, and physicians to heal its sick, or whatever the multitude of callings may be for which the University makes provision. Public service in the intention

of the University means much more than this. It means to have inspired these men and women who go forward to assume their part in the conduct of the material affairs of the Nation with the spirit of service—of active and intelligent and willing participation in the affairs of national life and the conscious responsibility to bear their part of its burdens.

And just here lies, in a most fundamental aspect of the matter, the inherent responsibility of the University to the Nation. Its teachings should be progressive; and not only should it lead along the whole long line of thought and action, whatever that may be, in the ideality of a new conception of the quest in search of truth or in the reality of the practical application of newly discovered fact, but it should, in its attitude toward the active affairs of the day, keep pace with the day's direct interests and relations, and promptly and fearlessly lay old ideas aside if they are unfitted to present-day conditions. It is a perfectly apparent fault of American life that we have as a national characteristic an open impressionism, but as a true concomitant a lack of stability; and the University is surely not there to increase or encourage it, but rather to preach by precept and by practice an enlightened conservatism that should have its salutary effect upon national action. There should be, however, in the University that open-mindedness to consider as its broad field of activity, not only the precious bequests of the past, however remote they may have been, if they have been weighed in the balance of experience and found worthy of keeping, but also in far increasing measure, and particularly and emphatically at this critical time in the Nation's history, the immediate interests of the present.

The great war has swept us, too, as inevitably must have been the case, into the vortex of confusion that has changed

the world. This is a new era and a new epoch of human history, and things will never be the same again; for after the storm and the murk and the clouds of the conflict have been cleared away, as they must sometime be, there will appear, as in the old-time vision of a world's renewal, a new earth to be shaped anew to the needs of men.

And to meet these needs the University must be organized to new and better service if it is to make the response that can reasonably be demanded of it in the fulfilment of its mission. More than ever before in this country's history must there be, under the new conditions that are already here, a deeper consciousness of the duty and responsibility of the citizen to the Nation. In the inaugural address last March of the President of the United States there occurs this significant sentence: "The thing I shall count upon, the thing without which neither counsel nor action will avail, is the unity of America—our America, united in feeling, in purpose, in its vision of duty, of opportunity, and of service." And these are the things in very truth to nationalize a nation, to unite it "in feeling, in purpose, in its vision of duty, of opportunity, and of service."

And is there not just here the true mission of the University set forth in terms as unmistakable as if to it they had been directly and consciously applied? The ideals of its accomplishment are as plainly the inculcation of the vision of a sense of service, and through its teachings of the opportunity to serve; and it is in these ways and along these lines that the University, more potently than almost any other human institution whatever, must be not only the support, but the conservator of the Nation, for out of the University comes and will come, not alone, as we sometimes express it, the hope of the Nation, but to no uncertain extent the reality of its existence and its perpetuation.

And the question arises: How can the University, in the legitimate exercise of its potentialities, better fulfil its mission in the presence of the new and untried conditions that confront us? The war messages of the President, that will go down to history among the great state documents of the Nation, have sent, as no such public pronouncements in our day and generation have done before them, a thrill of patriotism through the land and an awakened sense of the inherent significance to all of us of our democracy. They have left an ineffaceable mark upon the American spirit, and there is no new need at this time to characterize the convincing appeal they have sounded, that has touched all men's hearts and remade the Nation; but in all of it, in the light of the lesson of the war already learned for us, who have, nevertheless, in reality until now merely looked on from a distance, there is no appeal more trenchant and striking than the call for a new spirit and for new activities in American industry; for truly "it is evident to every thinking man," as the President states so emphatically, "that our industries on the farms, in the shipyards, in the mines, in the factories, must be made more prolific and more efficient than ever, and that they must be more economically managed and better adapted to the particular requirements of our task."

And it is directly here that I would call in, as it has not been called in before, the service of the University. I would not decry for an instant the reawakened patriotism that has come over the land with the declaration of war, for it has disclosed the soul of the Nation. But an emotional patriotism without action in the face of a world's crisis can lead nowhere but to ultimate disaster. "Patriotism," affirms a recent writer, "is useless without science"; which means, of course, that patriotism alone is impotent to conserve or to construct, if it is unsupported by the application of expert

knowledge to the active conditions of the Nation's life. I would join indissolubly together patriotism and science; and to meet this need and without any thought of destroying the paramount values of the present, I would make the idealism of the University, to a wider extent than many of us have thought possible, a *practical* idealism. The service of the University, and its opportunity to serve, as I see it in the light of the present and the prospect of the future, is in a new and extended sense, and as never before, to make science really the handmaid of industry; not in any sense to curtail or discourage the pursuit of science for science's sake, but to increase it in breadth and depth beyond any conditions at hand in our universities and institutes of research, to encourage investigation by the provision of proper opportunity to undertake the solution of new and important problems whose possibilities have been surmised but not yet realized, to give to it as an expansion of human knowledge no barriers but its own limitations of scrutiny and control.

But back of all this, and in direct contiguity with it, I would place the industries of the Nation. I would make the discoveries of science, however theoretical their value may seem in the beginning to be, immediately applicable, if it is at all possible, to the facts of industry, and I would add them as surely in this way to the industrial assets of the Nation. And to bring this about the University itself must play its part on a wider stage of interest and of action. With a new and enlightened sense of service it must establish relations more intimate and more sympathetic with the industries it shall strive to help, and in every way it must cooperate with them to an extent untried before.

But just here there lies a danger as insidious and destructive as any that confronts the University or the Nation: the danger, I mean, of a controlling materialism, of the cen-

tralization of aim and of effort that readily follows in its wake, and of an ultimate standardization not only of national activity, but of the Nation's thought and feeling, that in the end isolates it, and dehumanizes it, and makes it stand apart as a thing unto itself and different from the rest of mankind.

There is a nation that has gone precisely through this process of national decadence; a nation that beyond any other on the wide face of the globe has believed in and eagerly and intelligently put into direct and effective practice the discoveries of science, for which its keenest minds have been ever on the alert and to further which encouragement by opportunity and equipment almost without limit has been provided. It raised itself within an astonishingly short time to an extraordinary height of material prosperity, but in so doing it lost utterly, as it appears to the rest of the world, its vision of those greater things that constitute a nation if it is to take its place side by side with the enlightened nations of the earth in the forward march of human progress. To-day that nation that I have in mind is a nation of a single outlook, and that a wrong one, for it has lost its soul through a standardized materialism; and this not solely, to be sure, through the application alone of science to industry, but because that has been an impelling force that in its ultimate result of an unprecedented material prosperity, of an expansion of material influence undreamt of before, of an efficiency, to use its very word, of organization that has accrued as a concomitant to every aspect of national life. And inevitably, and as directly as cause and effect, it has obscured the nation's horizon, and more than anything else whatever has made it easy to destroy the nation's old-time vision and to bring about in the end only the thought of self-aggrandizement and selfish prosperity. And this is the

land of the "Critique of Pure Reason"; of Kant, and Fichte, and Schopenhauer, and Schleiermacher, and Schlegel, and all that long line of philosophical thinkers that once made Germany the land of contemplation and sometimes even the land of dreams! But that Germany has disappeared off the face of the earth, and it has not left, except as a heritage of history, a living trace behind it.

There is need, and an urgent need, in America for a far closer attention to the economics of national life, for thereon is dependent in the end the very fact of the Nation's existence. A country, however, without a wider vision of more things than that of material prosperity is lost indeed; and to realize it now, at this crucial time in our own Nation's life, is a factor of national preparedness much more vital and essential in its ultimate effect than any question of militancy whatever; for it must dominate as an impelling force, and more than ever before, our national consciousness, lest having in truth once found our soul, we shall lose it.

But there is no cause of pessimism as to the national attitude toward these things, or alarm for the national safety. There is, however, as truly as in the affairs of men, a tide in the affairs of nations that must be taken at its flood to lead to fortune. And this is the time to consider it, with a new understanding of the meaning that is involved in the present choice of direction as leading to desired result.

American materialism as a dominant note in our national life is still, as it always has been, a myth that our whole history from its first beginning absolutely disproves, and it has never been more plainly disproved than in the crisis that has come to us, in our turn, in the world's conflict. We have gone into the war with a true and splendid idealism; with the idea of a duty to perform and with a feeling of exaltation, of a mission to fulfil in bringing to pass those conditions of peace and stability and freedom from the misrule of

autocracy that alone can make the world a fit place to live in. An era of militant activity has begun; let us use it rationally in every way for the eternal good, and not heedlessly for the ultimate degradation of the Nation; for there are times, and this is one of them, when thinking men search their souls for a justification, if it can be found, of the things of life that in our careless self-sufficiency have seemed to us hitherto a matter of course and to be ours for the asking.

And the University in this new nationalization of the Nation has no uncertain part to play to carry out its mission. It should look more carefully and closely to the applications of science to industry, as I have already insisted; but it must also look with jealous care to those things of the spirit that are in its especial keeping to inculcate and to cherish. Never in all our history has the University been more able to respond, and certainly it has never been more willing to respond, to the call of the Nation; and the Nation as never before needs its help to fight what is not alone our cause, but the universal cause of civilization and of free government. In the President's war message to Congress, which cannot be too frequently read or quoted, he says in words that sound like a trumpet-call: "We shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free." For, in that fine phrase that has already become a watchword, "the world must be made safe for democracy."

And what of your own part, the part that you are to play who go out to-day into the real world of action? You stand to-day, as you have never stood before, upon the actual threshold of life. Shall you draw timidly backward into the

shade of your own individual environment or go consciously and proudly forward into the brighter light of national usefulness? A usefulness, I mean, that does not selfishly consider your own personal advancement as a goal of supreme attainment and desire, but one that shall further the advancement of the welfare of the community of which you are an integral part—a part intimately constituent of the whole in the true spirit of modern democracy; a part that only by its fusion with other parts can make the militant, forceful whole that with an irresistible preponderance of idea shall carry the Nation forward upon the upward path that leads to national integrity and the national perpetuity that is founded upon national truth. And the Nation, with your help, and only with it, shall in this way realize in very truth what John Milton long ago saw in that splendid vision of a nation's majesty:

"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam."

But the higher planes of national existence can be attained only by the conscious striving toward those ideals of national integrity that, like a guiding star, shall lead the Nation's vision, and whose course, if followed, alone shall determine to us and to succeeding generations the Nation's fate. And the University, too, within the Nation, must keep undiminished its vision of light to lead it onward to a deeper significance in national life and to a newer and wider national usefulness. And in no wise must this vision fail. For where there is no vision, the Nation and the University shall truly perish!

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